

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-05 COME-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 DLOS-05 COA-01 CG-00 DOTE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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TAGS: PINR, IC MMOL

SUBJECT: MEDIA COVERAGE CONCERNING RETRIEVAL OF OCEANOGRAPHIC
DEVICE

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION CINCLANT INFO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
MARCH 3RD FROM COMICEDEFOR REPEATED TO YOU FOR INFO:

QUOTE

MEDIA COVERAGE CONCERNING RETRIEVAL OF OCEANOGRAPHIC DEVICE--SITREP
THREE

A. COMICEDEFOR KEFLAVIK IC 271306Z FEB 75

1. THIS SITREP PROVIDES UPDATE OF REF A AND CONTAINS SUMMARY OF MOST
SIGNIFICANT MEDIA COVERAGE DURING PERIOD 27 FEB - 3 MAR 75 CONCERNING
RETRIEVAL AND CUSTODY OF OCEANOGRAPHIC DEVICE.

2. MEDIA INTEREST CONTINUES IN STORIES RELATING TO SURVEILLANCE
DEVICES AROUND ICELAND. MOST SIGNIFICANT COVERAGE WAS CARRIED BY
ICELANDIC STATE TELEVISION DURING WEEKLY NEWS SUMMARY PROGRAM
"KASTLJOS" (SPOTLIGHT) FRIDAY EVENING, 28 FEB.

LEAD STORY, RUNNING OVER 15 MINUTES, WAS PRESENTED BY NEWS DIRECTOR
EIDUR GUDNASON AND DEALT WITH THE "MYSTERIOUS CASE OF FLOATING
ESPIONAGE DEVICES DISCOVERED AROUND ICELAND". THE PROGRAM'S STARTING

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POINT WAS THE TWO LISTENING DEVICES NOW AGREED BY MOST OTHER ICE-

LANDIC MEDIA TO BE

SOVIET, THOUGH GUDNASON INSISTED UPON STRESSING THAT THERE WAS NO POSITIVE PROOF OF THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.

GUDNASON MENTIONED THE SIMILAR DEVICE WHICH WAS BROUGHT ASHORE IN THE WESTMAN ISLAND IN 1972, STRESSING THAT WHILE IT WAS TRANSPORTED TO KEFLAVIK BY THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD, NO ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR MINISTRY WAS AWARE OF THE INCIDENT. HE THEN MENTIONED A DEVICE FOUND NEAR VOPNAFJORDUR (EAST COAST) ON AUGUST 12, 1974 WHICH WAS ALSO TURNED OVER TO THE DEFENSE FORCE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION, THOUGH, ONCE AGAIN, THE COAST GUARD PARTICIPATED IN TRANSPORTATION. HE

ALSO CITED A DEVICE RECOVERED NEAR BORGAFJORDUR, (CENTRAL WEST COAST,)

ON AN UNSPECIFIED DATE WHICH SIMILARLY FOUND ITS WAY TO THE DEFENSE FORCE.

ONCE AGAIN, WITHOUT A DATE BEING SPECIFIED, HE RECOUNTED THE CASE OF AN ICELANDIC CIVILIAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM SEARCHING FOR A BODY ALONG THE COAST. THE TEAM WAS APPREHENDED NEAR THE DYE-5 COMMUNICATION SITE, THEIR CAMERAS CONFISCATED, AND THE FILM DEVELOPED BY ICELANDIC POLICE AUTHORITIES. HE QUOTED ONE OF THE MEN CONCERNING "A LONG, LOW BUILDING BEHIND THE FENCE WHICH HAD ARMED GUARDS AROUND IT", AND STATED THAT A CABLE OF UNKNOWN CHARACTER PASSES INTO THE SEA FROM DYE-5. HE THEN POINTED OUT THAT A SIMILAR CABLE WAS LAID INTO THE SEA FROM THE H-3

RADAR SITE NEAR HOFN AND RECOUNTED AN INCIDENT FROM 1971 WHEN A SOVIET

CRUISER AND A SHIP HE DESCRIBED AS "SIMILAR TO A STERN TRAWLER" (PHOTOS

APPEARED TO BE OF A SOVIET "SURA" CLASS HEAVY SALVAGE AND REPAIR VESSEL

WHICH SAILED BACK AND FORTH IN THE AREA NEAR WHERE THE H-3 CABLE ENTERS

THE SEA, BUT DEPARTED WHEN COAST GUARD SHIPS ARRIVED TO INVESTIGATE. THIS WAS FOLLOWED WITH REPORTS GOING BACK SEVERAL YEARS OF LARGE TANGLES

OF CABLE UP TO 600 FEET IN LENGTH BEING WASHED ASHORE AT VARIOUS POINTS,

INCLUDING TWICE NEAR H-3. THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT THE CABLE WAS UNCLASSIFIED

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ASSOCIATED WITH WHATEVER THE H-3 AND DYE-5 CABLES WERE CONNECTED TO.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROGRAM WAS THAT IT WAS IMPROPER FOR ITEMS SUCH AS THESE, FOUND IN ICELANDIC TERRITORY AND HAVING A POSSIBLE BEARING ON ICELANDIC SOVEREIGNTY AND SECURITY, TO BE TURNED OVER TO A FOREIGN AGENT FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISPOSAL. EVEN MORE IMPROPER WAS THE APPARENT FACT THAT THIS PRACTICE WAS CARRIED OUT BY AN ICELANDIC AGENCY (COAST

GUARD) WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

GUDNASON CONCEDED THAT ICELAND APPARENTLY HAS NO CAPABILITY FOR HANDLING POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS OBJECTS AS WELL AS LIMITED RESEARCH FACILITIES. HE DID FEEL THAT SUCH ITEMS SHOULD BE EXHAUSTIVELY EXAMINED

TO DETERMINE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THEIR CAPABILITIES, INTENT, AND

OWNERSHIP AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF ICELANDIC AUTHORITIES.

HE DEMANDED EXPLANATIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT AS TO WHY THE DEFENSE FORCE HAS BEEN GIVEN JURISDICTION OVER THESE ITEMS AND WHY ICELANDIC REPRESENTATIVES HAD BEEN DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THEM. (APPARENTLY, GUDNASON HAD NOT SEEN THE STATE TV NEWS PROGRAM ONE HOUR EARLIER. THAT PROGRAM PRESENTED NEWS COVERAGE, INCLUDING BOTH STILL PICTURES AND MOVIES, OF ICELANDIC OFFICIALS EXAMINING THE DEVICE WHICH

WAS RECOVERED FROM THE BEACH NEAR HOFN. REFERENCE WAS ALSO MADE TO EXAMINATION OF THE OTHER DEVICE BY ICELANDIC OFFICIALS ON 25 FEB.)

GUDNASON'S HANDLING OF THE STORY STRESSED THE SEEMING SECRECY INVOLVED IN DEFENSE FORCE INSISTENCE THAT QUESTIONS BE DIRECTED TO THE

FOREIGN MINISTRY, IMPLYING THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE HAD INTERESTS TO CONCEAL IN THIS REGARD. HIS VARIOUS REFERENCES TO DEFENSE FORCE INSTALLATIONS AND CABLES TO THE SEA SEEMED TO INFER THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE'S OWN ACTIONS WERE NO LESS SUSPICIOUS THEN THOSE OF THE UNIDENTIFIED OWNERS OF THE TWO DEVICES. FINALLY, HE CRITICIZED THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT FOR WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS SERVILITY TO THE FOREIGN MILITARY FORCE IN PERMITTING THE OBJECTS TO PASS OUT OF ICELANDIC HANDS. SOMEWHAT LESS EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON THE NEED FOR ICELAND TO BE ABLE TO PERFORM ITS OWN TECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS INTO SUCH OBJECTS.

SMALL-SCALE SAMPLING OF AUDIENCE REACTION TO PROGRAM APPEARS TO INDICATE THAT MOST PEOPLE WERE NOT PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY THE UNCLASSIFIED

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ANTI-IDF IMPLICATIONS, CAUSED IN PART BY THE FORTUITOUS APPEARANCE OF CONTRADICTORY NEWS AN HOUR PRIOR TO THE "SPOTLIGHT" BROADCAST. SOME VIEWERS FELT THAT THE MENTION OF VARIOUS IDF INSTALLATIONS POSSIBLY BEING CONNECTED TO A SIMILAR NATO SURVEILLANCE MAY HAVE ENHANCED THE REPUTATION OF THE DEFENSE FORCE RATHER THAN DAMAGED IT, INDICATING A MORE EXTENSIVE AND IMPORTANT ROLE THAN PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED.

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